Spring 8-15-2013

ENG 3804-001: John Milton and the Radical Defense of Liberty: Poet, Prophet, Polemicist

M Caldwell
Eastern Illinois University

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Course Policy
A major author course presents you with a unique opportunity to engage in a sustained study of a single author and his or her works, to develop a sophisticated understanding of an author’s literary canon, and to evaluate that body of work in its historical context. In this way, it is similar to undertaking a major research project such as you might in an independent study or honors thesis. The goal here is not merely to survey the author’s works, but to read widely within the author’s literary canon in order to grapple with ideological development and conflict over time.

In this course we will examine in depth some of the greatest prose and poetry of one of the most influential writers in the history of literature: John Milton. While intellectually very rewarding, seventeenth-century prose and poetry is rarely easy for the twenty-first century reader. I advise you to give yourself ample time to do the reading carefully and not to flinch when confronted by difficulty—and rest assured, you will be confronted by difficulty. In order to rise above this challenge, you should be a proactive reader: when you don’t understand something, re-read; consult textual notes, handbooks and online resources such as the Oxford English Dictionary (available through Booth Library’s webpage); pose questions in class; and by all means come talk to me during office hours.

Class time will be devoted to discussing the political, religious, and intellectual context of Milton’s works and to addressing both their complexities and our own confusion.

In order to succeed in this class it is absolutely essential for you do the reading, attend class regularly with your text in hand, and take notes. Much of the material on the exams will come directly from class lectures and discussion.

Office Hours, Plagiarism, and Attendance
I am absolutely committed to your success in this course. You should consult with me early and often about your work and ideas. I am happy to help you at all stages of your writing process—and note that there should be a process!—from working through difficult passages to developing your thesis to constructing and/or revising drafts.

Plagiarists will be reported to the Office of Student Standards and will fail the course. If you are confused about plagiarism, you must ask me about it before you turn in an assignment.

My attendance policy is simple: I expect you to attend every class. By attend, I mean not merely showing up as a warm body, but being intellectually present in the class. Bring your book; take notes; come with something to say and/or be prepared to respond thoughtfully to the matters that we discuss in class. After your 3rd absence, I will lower your final grade by 1/3 a letter grade for each subsequent attendance.

Enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to the state of affairs outlined in this course policy and in the schedule of readings below.
**Assignments and Grade Distribution**

Short paper on short poetry or prose (5-7 pages): 10%
Research paper on *Paradise Lost* (8-10 pages): 35%
Midterm: 10%
Final: 25%
Participation: 20%

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

Tues. 8/19  
Introduction

Thurs. 8/21  
“L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso”

Tues. 8/27  
*Comus, or Masque at Ludlow*

Thurs. 8/29  
*Masque at Ludlow*

Tues. 9/3  
“Lycidas”

Thurs. 9/5  
*Reason of Church Government; Regicide and Republic*, p. 8-24, 32-46, 48-67

Tues. 9/10  
Of Education

Thurs. 9/12  
*Areopagitica*, R&R p. 184-191

Tues. 9/17  
*Areopagitica*

Thurs. 9/19  
*Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce*

Tues. 9/24  
Sonnet 8, sonnet 12, “On the New Forcers,” sonnets 15-17

Thurs. 9/26  
Sonnet 7, sonnet 19, sonnets 21-23

Tues. 10/1  
*The Ready and Easy Way*

Wed. 10/3  
*Second Defense*, **paper due**

Tues. 10/8  
**Midterm**

Thurs. 10/10  
*PL 1*

Tues. 10/15  
*PL 2*

Thurs. 10/17  
*PL 3*

Tues. 10/22  
*PL 4*

Thurs. 10/24  
*PL 5*

Tues. 10/29  
*PL 6*

Thurs. 10/31  
*PL 7*

Tues. 11/5  
*PL 8*

Thurs. 11/7  
*PL 9*

Tues. 11/12  
*PL 10*

Thurs. 11/14  
*PL 11*

Tues. 11/19  
*PL 12*

Thurs. 11/21  
*PL catch up day*
Nov. 25-29 Thanksgiving Break

Tues. 12/3    Samson Agonistes
Thurs. 12/5   Samson Agonistes, final paper due

Final Exam    Monday, December 9, 1015-1215